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Social Media in Computing and Library Services at the University of Huddersfield

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Using Web 2.0
At Computing and Library Services in the University of Huddersfield we have been experimenting with Web 2.0 tools since 2005. We have a keyword cloud on the front page of the catalogue that displays the most popular keywords of the last two days.

In monitoring the clickthroughs, we have discovered that usage is at its highest in October/November, indicating that new users find this service helpful towards the beginning of the academic year. In addition, borrowers’ histories are used to make suggestions by informing users of other books that borrowers of a particular book have used.

Furthermore, if students login to the ‘patron’ area of the catalogue, they are given suggestions relevant to their courses using anonymized borrowing data from other students on their course. Since 2005 we have seen an increase in the average number of items borrowed from 17.10 to 18.92 per student.
Using RSS feeds and Dewey numbers to publicize relevant books

RSS feeds are used to publicize new books, based on matching Dewey numbers, which are used for a particular course module, as well as new items purchased by the library. This is more efficient and useful than providing manual lists from the various subject teams.

Tracking journal usage and sharing the results

Recently we have been looking at journals that have been accessed by users on the same course, taking inspiration from bX[TM] Recommender from Ex Libris. EZproxy sessions are used to track which titles are used by students in a particular session. These titles are then displayed in our A-Z list of journals. One such list can be found here: http://library.hud.ac.uk/perl/summon/journalinfo.pl?issn=0002-0729. Although this is not an exact science, comments from subject teams have been encouraging.

Making use of our e-resources blog

We use our e-resources blog (http://library.hud.ac.uk/blogs/er/) to let users know about problems with resources. We don’t expect users to actively search out the blog, so we have embedded it into the staff and student portal, our Summon front page, and on the launch page of particular resources.

Training staff and researchers to use social media

We have been using RSS feeds, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook for some time to inform and engage our users. However, in 2008 we realized there was only a small number of staff in the service who were actually authoring pages. To change this, we launched ‘25 Things’, based on ‘23 Things’, created by Helene Blowers, then Technology Director at the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (US). It was a self-paced course that ran over a period of around 10 weeks and encouraged participants to explore a new Web 2.0 ‘thing’ each week. A key feature was the requirement that participants blog about their experiences, receive peer support on the various tasks, and also begin to understand the benefits of being part of an active online social network.

In 2010, this course was developed further into ‘25 Research Things’, a course undertaken jointly by the University of Huddersfield and the Research Information Network (RIN), to enable a group of researchers to engage more effectively with social media tools. One important reason for this course was that researchers often feel bewildered by the array of technology available to them, and struggle to understand how it could support their professional activities.
The Lemon Tree Project
The latest development at Huddersfield is the Lemon Tree Project, which is seeking to increase the use of library resources through a social, game-based, eLearning platform. Users will register with the system and be able to earn points and rewards for interacting with library resources, such as leaving comments and reviews of library books. Integration with other social networks such as Twitter and Facebook will be built into the system. The project will launch in autumn 2011.

References
About the Learning 2.0 project: http://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.com/
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Electronic Resources Blog: http://library.hud.ac.uk/blogs/er/
Summon@Huddersfield: http://library.hud.ac.uk/summon/
Library news for the Business School: http://library.hud.ac.uk/blogs/hubs/
Library News for subjects in Art, Design and Architecture: http://library.hud.ac.uk/blogs/artdes/
University of Huddersfield Library on Twitter: #hudlib
University of Huddersfield Repository on Twitter: #hudeprints
University of Huddersfield Library on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/University-of-Huddersfield-Library/6409332612
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